

Amendments

In the Claims

Amendments to the Claims are indicated in the claims listing submitted herewith. Claims 1, 2, and 4-27 are pending in the application. Claim 19 has been amended to overcome prior art. No new matter is presented with the amendments submitted herewith.

What Is Claimed Is:

1. (Previously presented) A method for removing fluid from the intestinal tract of a host by directly delivering an effective amount of water-absorbent polymer to the intestinal tract wherein the polymer is capable of absorbing at least about 10 times its weight in physiological saline.

2. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the polymer is enterically coated and the method of delivery is oral administration.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 2 wherein the polymer is capable of absorbing at least 20 times its weight in physiological saline.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein the polymer is capable of absorbing at least 30 times its weight in physiological saline

6. (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein the polymer is capable of absorbing at least 40 times its weight in physiological saline.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the polymer is formed by polymerizing acrylate containing monomers.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the polymer is formed by polymerizing monomer comprising acrylic acid or salts thereof.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the polymer is a polysaccharide.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the polymer includes functional groups for selectively absorbing blood borne waste products.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the polymer includes functional groups for selectively absorbing urea.

12. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the polymer includes functional groups for selectively absorbing phosphate.

13. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the enteric coating is selected from at least one of: hydroxypropylmethylcellulose, hydroxypropylmethylcellulose phthalate, methacrylic acid polymers, or polymers of derivatives of methacrylic acid.

14. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the polymer is placed within an enterically coated capsule.

B1 15. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein the enteric coating is selected from at least one of: hydroxypropylmethylcellulose, hydroxypropylmethylcellulose phthalate, methacrylic acid polymers, or polymers of derivatives of methacrylic acid.

16. (Previously presented) A method for treating fluid overload states in a host by directly delivering an effective amount of a water-absorbent polymer to the intestinal tract wherein the polymer is capable of absorbing at least about 10 times its weight in physiological saline.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein the polymer is enterically coated and the method of delivery is oral administration.

18. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein the fluid overload state is selected from at least one of: edema, congestive heart failure, ascites, and renal insufficiency.

19. (Currently amended) A composition for removing fluid from the intestinal tract of a host comprising an enterically coated, non-systemic, non-toxic, water-absorbing polymer as the active ingredient, wherein the water-absorbing polymer is capable of absorbing at least 10 times its weight in physiological saline.

20. (Original) The composition of claim 19 wherein the polymer is capable of absorbing at least 20 times its weight in physiological saline.

21. (Original) The composition of claim 20 wherein the polymer is capable of absorbing at least 30 times its weight in physiological saline

22. (Original) The composition of claim 21 wherein the polymer is capable of absorbing at least 40 times its weight in physiological saline.

23. (Original) The composition of claim 19 wherein the polymer is formed by polymerizing acrylate containing monomers.

24. (Original) The composition of claim 19 wherein the polymer is formed by polymerizing monomer comprising acrylic acid or salts thereof.

B1 25. (Original) The composition of claim 19 wherein the polymer is a polysaccharide.

26. Currently amended The composition of claim 19 wherein the polymer is a crosslinked polyallyl amine.

27. (Original) The composition of claim 19 wherein the polymer is provided in bead form.